

September 2001

Merger enhances Air Force leadership options

by Master Sgt. Rick Burnham, Air Force Print News

On paper, the merging of two major Air Force personnel offices in the Pentagon appears to simply be a matter of combining similar tasks, of streamlining an area in which one unit can do the job of two.

But, Air Force officials said, the combination of the General Officer Matters Office with the Senior Executive Service Matters Office Sep. 1, will result in much more than just a transparent, organizational shift. The resulting unit will provide the Air Force with an enhanced capability to manage its senior leaders – a better avenue to put the best people in the positions they need to be in.

“The merger of these two offices is a landmark effort,” said Col. Richard S. Hassan, chief of AFGOMO. “It will better prepare us to realize the vast potential of our Air Force leaders.”

Hassan, who will head the new Senior Leader Management Office after the merger, said the change will give the Air Force a number of advantages over the old system.

“It will not only allow us to better use our leadership team, but will also allow us to develop that team more deliberately,” he said. “This will lay a solid foundation, giving us a bigger pool of talent to meet the challenges of the future.”

Dr. James Roche, secretary of the Air Force, agreed with the colonel, adding that the new structure will provide a number of different benefits for the Air Force of the 21st century. He noted that the merger was the vision of Gen. Michael E. Ryan, who retires as Air Force chief of staff Sept. 6.

“This combination will help us realize one of General Ryan’s goals as chief of staff – to build an enduring, unified cadre of aerospace leaders,” the secretary said. “In today’s total Air Force, we simply must identify, develop and motivate talented individuals, military and civilian, to fulfill the missions of our Expeditionary Aerospace Force. By merging our General Officer and Senior Executive Service programs, we will enhance operating efficiencies and reduce costs, while dramatically boosting ‘cross-cultural’ awareness among officers and senior civilians in the Air Force.

“The development of leaders who understand the requirements of our Total Force — active military, civilian, guard, reserve, and contractor personnel — will serve as yet another tangible hallmark of the tremendous contributions that Mike Ryan has made to his country during his military career.”

Currently, AFGOMO provides “lifecycle” management of Air Force flag officer corps, from the point they are selected for promotion to brigadier general until their retirement. That includes all assignments, awards, housing and enlisted aid matters – essentially any personnel matter that would involve a general officer, Hassan said.

AFSEMO provides policy guidance and assistance for the management and administration of the SES Corps with the civilian personnel flights around the Air Force handling the day-to-day operations.

Combining the two offices will essentially do two things for the Air Force, Hassan said.

“This will send a strong message to the force that we definitely consider both general officers and SES civilians as part of the senior leadership of the Air Force,” he said. “It also gives us the capability to more effectively use our leaders’ various talents. In the future, we will look at certain challenges – jobs – and we’ll be better positioned to find the most competent, talented individual to handle the task at hand.”

Hassan used a sports analogy to explain the benefits of the new organization.

“A baseball team does not need nine pitchers – it needs shortstops and catchers and right fielders too,” he said. “Instead of having half the team on one side and the other half on the other side, we’re combining the two so that we can better choose the right people for the right jobs. It takes experts at every position to make a great team.” @